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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the politics of education with emphasis on the uses and influences of educational research in educational policy formation. Objectives are to identify information needs of policy makers and to shed light on the educational policy process. The hypothesis is that there is a lack of unity in studies of the political aspects of public education with regard to methodology, theory, and the linkage of one set of findings to another. To rectify these shortcomings, this study applied deductive theory to investigate how educational research is used by policy makers (interpreted to include federal, state, and local agency officials authorized to oversee schooling). Research utilization is broadly interpreted to include use as an information source for policy makers, political ammunition, an aid to problem solving, and a means of conceptualizing issues. Problems which arise in the educational policy making process include ignorance among policy makers regarding relevant research, time pressures which preclude extensive research and/or searches for existing research findings, failure to adequately assess policy implementation based on specific research recommendations, narrow focus of most research, value-laden research, and bias on the part of policy makers. Recommendations to alleviate these problems include recognition that there are different types of research (descriptive, exploratory, critical, forecasting) and that different research findings are appropriate for different stages of the policy process (issue clarification, alternative formulation, decisionmaking, implementation, and evaluation). (DB)

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IS THE PRINCE LISTENING?

POLITICS OF EDUCATION AND THE POLICYMAKER

SP 012 935

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Prepared for delivery at the 1980 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Assn., Washington Hilton Hotel, August 28-31, 1980.

Abstract

Is the Prince Listening?
Politics of Education and the Policymaker

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The paper outlines a conceptual approach to a little-studied phase of the politics of education, the linkage between education policy making and research utilization. While this linkage has been examined in general theory terms, little attention has been given to the "So What?" study of how politics of education research is used by policy makers.

Barriers to policy makers using such research are set out. These are the Nothing Works syndrome (null findings of program effects as a function of use of negative hypothesis); the Bad News syndrome (as policy is an effort to anticipate the future, mistaken policy efforts will discourage policy makers' use of social research; and the Run for the Hills syndrome (the speed of policy makers' needs for research and the deliberateness of social science are in conflict). Implications of the insufficient time lines are explored fully.

The paper than posits a model of policy makers' information needs and the policy process, in which information is seen as having different uses at different stages of the process for different contestants. The forthcoming Mitchell book on legislative roles and information needs is suggested as illustrative of one way to approach this linkage.

IS THE PRINCE LISTENING?
POLITICS OF EDUCATION AND THE POLICYMAKER

The Way We Were and Are

POE as a Growth Market

While public education may be, as some argue, a declining industry, the study of its political aspects are surely prime growth stocks. So much is this so that recently we have had several quo vadis papers, along with the continuing useful round-ups of current research. The prospectuses of Eliot and Campbell of two decades ago, after some delay, have called forth a spate of investors. Many now are putting their intellect and time, as well as private and federal funds, to work in generating new knowledge. Some who were in the first wave of investors are seen as the epitome of the profit impulse--finding a need and filling it.

The question of the usefullness of all this knowledge does not yield many answers. The problem is that, unlike the market metaphor, there was no invisible hand of social theory to guide, focus, and multiply the research and its findings. What one decided to study in the politics of education (hereafter POE), the relevant methodology to apply, the significant theory to guide the research design, the linkage of one set of findings to another--all lack a satisfying unity. (Harman) For some this is the cause of much regret, often expressed while urging others to buy one's own intellectual approach. Others are indifferent to this concern, so intent are they on seeking funds, managing results, and seeking publication. Yet others, including myself, while understanding the concern for guiding theory do not think it surprising and so expect little else.

Why such lack of concern? First, some are more interested in focusing upon an aspect of POE which attracts them for personal reasons, and not in pursuing what seems to others "significant" or "important" research. Second, increasingly this is a sellers' market, and our Ph.D. and MPA products can find support for their research interests by employment in the family of governments, to use Mosher's felicitious phrase. Such institutions have never been the interested in broad social science theory, unlike the case of economists and government.

Third, there is currently no over-arching social theory which can generate more than even a few middle-range sub-theories. I have never defended systems analysis as theory, for it lacks the capacity--as so many have now noted--to generate directed hypotheses amenable to empirical testing. Marxist theory lacks that capacity, too, possessing much more the central quality of a self-fulfilling prophecy looking for support for its view of reality. So one can ignore the call to invest in a architectonic theory because the search is more interesting elsewhere, rewards can be obtained without such theory, and that particular emperor of theory may actually be stark naked.

But at the level of limited-range theory there is much more variety and intellectual vigor in what is pursued under the banner of POE. Of course, this does not mean that much more needs to be done, including more comparative units of analysis such as districts or states, i.e., politics viewed

across these units. (Burlingame and Geske) Soon I hope, some will turn to comparative studies across national units, as Peterson (1973) and as Hofferbert and Cameron (1974) started in the 1970s. If we do, we should see American specialists turning to examine national states and thereby learning some of the major intellectual problems of such research design. (Wirt, 1980 d). My own recent experience in this matter with Grant Harman in Australia was truly a learning experience about our own states' role in education policy making. (Harman and Wirt, 1980)

On the American scene, however, we can find studies focused on every one of the classic stages of policy-making--issue emergence, alternative formulation, authoritative resolution, implementation, and evaluation. One could imagine the syllabus of a graduate course, an introduction to POE, using those stages with much writing on all but issue emergence (Elder and Cobb, chap. 5) The contribution that all this makes to study of the POE has been surveyed world-wide, with updates, by Harman (1974, 1979), including his contribution today.

Research Uses: A Neglected Phase of POE

What this paper seeks to do is to consider the implications of the existing POE research for policy makers. In short, has all this highly commendable intellectual effort generated interest among those whom we study? More, why do education decision makers not "use" what we write about? Such questions, are central to the larger field of "research utilization," which involves other policies than merely education. Maybe it is a sign of the growth of the POE that we now have enough research products to want to know the "So What?" part of that effort.

Given that scarcity of study, this paper addresses a number of the major problems that arise in research utilization by policy makers. The scholar seeking to advise the powerful is an ancient theme. (Goldhamer) Some have not done well at it. The Tyrant of Syracuse sent Plato home for his bad advice. More recently, when Machiavelli dedicated his book of statecraft to the lord of his city state, in an effort to be called back from rural exile to the delights of Florence, he entitled it The Prince. No parallels are implied, but history records that this lord ignored his call.

Methodology

This paper is an exercise primarily in deductive theory which could serve as a beginning to studying how our research is used. It is necessary first to define both the unit of analysis-policy makers--and their research utilization.

The Focus of Analysis: Policy Makers

When we raise the question of the implications of POE research for policy makers, we usually think of those federal, state, and local agency officials authorized to oversee schooling. Most of this paper has this group as its focus.

But we should not that policy in this and other fields is considerably influenced by professional societies. Thus, schools of education are quasi-authoritative agencies because they are not merely administrators of laws given them by states. Traditionally, authoritative agencies have been much influenced by them in producing the corpus of education law, that today surrounds education. More, these schools themselves often reverberate to the recommendations of disparate professional societies. This latent political linkage of the profession has become quite manifest in recent years in teacher-administrator conflicts. Most sensationally it is seen in the mobilization of the National Education Association in the 1976 and 1980 presidential elections to support Jimmy Carter; about 10-15 percent of the Democratic delegates to the 1980 convention were NEA members.

But the profession's role in using POE research will not be treated here. That it is a political role demonstrated elsewhere (Wirt 1980c). One aspect of that role is the degree to which schools of education consciously incorporate the POE orientation into training programs. What such a program might look like has been argued by several writers. (Johnson; Milstein and Conway; Wiles, 1979) The growth of the POE special interest group at the AERA surely attests to the presence of this orientation in more places than a decade ago.

Rather, this paper focuses upon another set of policy makers, the political authorities. These create the service norms, the resources, and the capacities of the education system from all levels of government. They directly act to affect the quantity and quality of education received by the student clientele. This group offers the opportunity, maybe even the need, to move beyond our usual consideration of the process, the substance, and the effects of school politics. Formal and informal actors in power roles--major influences in a multiple causation world--are also the objects of influence. They are influenced by ideas from beyond their own view of the world, and some of these ideas stem from social science research. These world views often clash and so require close study to understand one another. (Halperin) Thus the California Policy Seminar of the University of California has developed as a way for scholars and state policy makers to discuss their mutual needs and to understand better how each operates and views the political world. Policy makers, then, are potentially the acted-upon by searching for answers to policy relevant questions. Those answers are important to them both in terms of representational theory and of simple political survival.

In this paper I raise some fundamental questions about how the uses of political research in education policy making. In so doing, there emerges the realization that not only policy makers but POE scholars themselves need to understand more clearly the role they play in the process. I have elsewhere (Wirt, 1980b) suggested how the failure to clarify that role plays into the hands of policy makers looking for intellectual hired guns. The bias implied is not that which comes from "cooking the data." A more likely bias comes from the fact that interested parties other than an agency may be shut off from research results which become the basis of public policy. (Coleman) Here I expand that concern to a broader view of the uses of social research.

"Use of Social Research" Defined

It would help clarify the analysis to understand that there is not one but numerous meanings to "use of social research" or "research utilization."

Weiss, in a significant book on this subject, (1977a) distinguishes a half-dozen meanings, a warning that the term is fraught with conceptual problems of causation. The result is that "Much of the sogginess in the whole discussion of policy uses of social research derives from conceptual ambiguities." (Weiss, 1977a, p. 11).

She notes that the usual model of using research is instrumental or problem solving in orientation. That is, "the model is a linear one. A problem exists; information or understanding is lacking either to generate a solution to the problem or to select among alternative solutions; research provides the missing knowledge; a solution is reached." (Weiss 1977a, p. 11-12). Another model is "knowledge-driven." Here, basic research findings generate policy-making opportunities in their development and application, e.g., biochemical research, directs scientists to find the oral contraceptive pill. A third model is of policy making as a highly interactive, multiple-source process in which research is but one of the factors at work on the policy maker seeking knowledge. A fourth model is of research as political ammunition. Here, the policy maker, already committed to a policy position, uses research for self-confirmation; in this, the potential for distortion or knowledge suppression is quite high. A fifth model, Miscellaneous, contains two sub-sets of research uses, i.e., for strategic in-fighting over policy and for maintenance of institutions that support research.

Finally, a little studied use of research is for conceptualizing the nature of the conflict issues or for redefining what issues are most important. In this use, "Social research may sensitize decision makers to new issues and turn what were non-problems into policy problems (or) convert existing social problems into non-problems (or) drastically revise the way that a society thinks about issues" and about alternative methods of dealing with them. An incremental, rather than a dramatic, change process is at work here. (Weiss 1977a, pp. 15-16)

It is well to note Weiss' conclusion, that

> the usual definition, the direct application of research findings to solve a specific problem, is not the common pattern.... The ways that most social research is 'used' are much more diffuse and circuitous. [A survey by Patton et al. (1977) of how federal decision makers in the health field used 20 evaluation studies found that] they did not involve taking a hunk of new knowledge, turning the lever, and spewing out a decision to match.

Most important in this and other studies, the greatest influence on policy makers was not in hard-core data or single-study findings "but rather social science generalizations, concepts, and perspectives. This 'soft' social science had an influence on the way they conceptualized the issues and dealt with policy." (Weiss, 1977a, p. 16)

In a series of related studies on research utilization, there emerges some challenge to the now conventional notion of researchers as tools of policymakers. Rather than viewing the academic and policy communities as totally different, Rich (1977) found among bureaucrats in seven federal

agencies predominant views that: they do value the results of survey research in helping them solve problems; they are open to new information; they also have some mistrust of researchers; but they are aware of the special needs and conditions in the research community, yet they still value these research skills; and they are not unsophisticated about methodology.

Useem (1977) reported from members of four disciplines, including political science, that 1973-1974 federal funds and positions on federal advisory bodies produced research utilities for not only the federal agencies but for the disciplines as well. The work of Patton et al. (1977) demonstrates that we may have been underestimating the impact of evaluation studies on policy makers (at least in the health field), for they reported having many uses for it. Impact becomes more noticeable when its definition is not so narrow, or when one examines the personal factor, namely, the interest or lack of interest of key officials in such studies. In another study, an appreciation for and sensitivity to social research appeared among 575 upper-level federal officials, if certain conditions prevailed. (Caplan, 1977)

What such knowledge points to, is that when we speak of "the use" of social research we are missing the fact that uses are diverse. Policy makers with any intellectual sophistication at all, or just for reasons of political survival, come to know this. One set of federal officials in mental health, evaluating 50 major research reports, found most useful those which had some similar elements, i.e., the research quality was high, the findings were oriented toward action, and the results challenged the policy status quo although not fundamentally. (Weiss and Bucuvales, 1977). In short, they appreciated research when they knew the knowledge given them was valid, the results were translatable into action, and that action would help change programs so as to further the aims of the organization.

Why Won't The Prince Listen?

These more sanguine findings about the relationship between social science and policy makers sharply contradict the prevalent skepticism among many in evaluation research. (Crain; Huse; Kirp) Part of this difference may stem from the fact that more recent evidence, rooted in the mid-1970s, came some years after the first round of evaluation, when scholars and policy makers first entered an uneasy alliance. A likely inference of the newer data is that we now have, at least at the federal level, policy makers increasingly sophisticated about research methods and uses.

Nothing Works, Bad News, and Run for the Hills

Yet not all policy makers are in such a state of grace that they understand methods, research design, and such. Nor are all policy analysts sophisticated about the needs and working milieu of the policy maker. Hence there are several major barriers to the translation of research into public policy, which result too often in minimizing the work of evaluation. Meltsner (1976) has written convincingly on the problem of the insider who succumb to the folkways of bureaucracy because his or her research lacks reinforcement from the profession in the form of standards and sanctions. But whether from the inside or outside, several problems arise in the nature of research itself which limits policy makers' use of research findings.

First is the "Nothing Works" syndrome. Not all social problems--maybe none--have "solutions," i.e., full satisfaction of a group need. But social research into policy, by its very procedures, is more often than not pessimistic about the malleability of these problems. The standard use of the negative hypothesis is geared to point only to that which does not work i.e., does not explain the variation under study. But what will provide the explanation or what will work are exactly what policy makers need to know, whether in defending the status quo or challenging it. But the social scientist is trained to explain what does not work. This result disappoints the policy maker who does not understand this process or who is looking for a quick policy fix.

Second, and even worse for the policy maker, is the "Bad News" syndrome. In the early stages of policy development, policy is not yet sufficiently implemented to know what is effective in achieving program goals. Then policy is more like an experiment, as many have noted (Pressman and Wildavsky), i.e., if you do X, then you will achieve Y results. But the X that is effective is often little more than a grounded hunch, backed by anectodal evidence. As a result, research at this early stage is bound to be filled more with evidence of programs not working than otherwise. This is bad news to the policy makers' power status. Evaluation not done, or done, so poorly one can't tell what happened, is in some respects more functional for the policy maker than news that things aren't working. In short, non-results maintain existing power and status more than reports of failures. One can pretend things are going well much easier if faced with null findings than with findings of failure.

Recall that because so much policy making is satisfying, not optimizing, policy departures can work only minimally. Social research which tells the client and the public that little is changing (almost always the case in research over a limited time span), is giving both parties bad news. It is not welcomed by the constituences, particularly by those advocating change. No one faces up well to the news of personal failure, and organizations are no exception. Because one can't control the procedures used to achieve this finding--assuming some independence by consultants in design and method--they must view the carriers of bad news much the way ancient kings did who chopped off their heads.

As a result, policy makers are increasingly moved to learn, or hire those who know how, to challenge the methodology. Note that a finely detailed, quasi-experiment of the police profession's holiest of holy doctrines failed--its verification in field tests--putting more police in the field in Kansas City did not bring down the crime rate. Thereupon the police chiefs association rebutted the study with a many-item critique of the methodology, including numerous ways that that city differed from, say, Los Angeles (the latter had more hills, for example). Similarly, the methodological debates over desegregation, reading gains, and the life pay-offs of education are familiar to education specialists. One result has been the growing distrust of educators by the general public when these debates trickle down to it, as well as a general suspicion by many education policy makers.

Another problem is the "Run for the Hills" syndrome, which refers to volatile issues that are episodically thrust before policy makers. The

problem is that social research requires sufficient time to use rigorous methods, but policy making requires new knowledge immediately. A policy making that is present-oriented and reactive to pressures from significant power centers are conditions that work against the more deliberative aspects of social science.

For example, when policy makers face issues that do not emerge but erupt, there is little time for planning and conducting research, including a rigorous evaluation of alternatives for meeting the issue. Too, policy institutions are designed, by definition, not to act promptly unless pressured by many groups. That is, when there is high agreement that a crisis does exist, many people clamor to "do something" about the crisis. But the psychology of decision makers is to succeed, i.e., get re-elected, continue in the appointment made by a superior, or look well among peers. However, new policy departures carry a potential for failure. Hence policy is usually made within traditional lines unless crisis erupts. In the period prior to the eruption, when there was time for research, there is too often too little interest in it. However, when it is needed, there is no time for doing it well. All these conditions work against social research being a continuing or regular part of the policy process, or against its being done over a sufficient time to show results. (Salomon)

Limits of Time and Place

Even if we could avoid these problems which make policy making and social research uneasy partners, problems of time and place remain to limit the policy utility of much present POE research.

The Crucial Factor of Time Lines

Time is often urged as the major single difference between the policy making and the social research world. (Halperin) The former has a time line too short to show whether anything worked in dealing with the crisis, while the latter's time-lines must necessarily be long. Does this mean there is no hope for the model of research use which Weiss termed instrumental or knowledge-driven? Does it mean that social research can never be anything but a 'aid companion, pleasant and self-effacing but always a satellite of power, "speaking truth to power" when what power wants is not truth but survival? Clearly not, as shown in recent studies of federal policy makers' increasing appreciation of quality social research. (Weiss, 1977b)

The highest utility of social research comes in the earliest stage of policy making, after issues had emerged, and while alternative policy responses are being formulated. This presumes some time is possible to contribute to the policy debate. Such work can hardly be done during the formulation stage, which must rely upon "self knowledge," research generated at an earlier date on this or parallel policy problems. Such research can involve shaping the general orientation of policy makers to a policy area. We earlier noted how this shaping function seemed to be a widespread but heretofore unknown result of much social research over time.

A second place in the policy process where social research can be effective is in longer feedback, when one is tracing the impact of policy programs.

Time is needed to build an inventory of methods and research designs on impact, because there is disagreement among even the best scholars over such methodological problems. The methodological debate over the Coleman report centered on his preference for the standardized beta coefficient and his critics' preference for the unstandardized statistic; that is reflective of different preferences in sociology versus economics. (Cohen and Garet; Luecke and McGinn; Winegarden) That falls under the heading of matters in political analysis which are DBI--dull but important. Time is needed to work out these disagreements and to estimate the utility of varying programs upon different clienteles in different socio-economic contexts. We are beginning to see that some of the early wave of pessimism about using national policy to deal with national problems was unwarranted in light of more longitudinal studies. (Aaron; Orfield; Pettigrew; Hyman et al.; Tuinman et al.; Akin and Garfinkel). But as usual, it takes time for revisionist evidence to spread, even among scholars. So sometime in the 1980s we can expect a Time magazine cover story on how well American schools and teachers have been doing.

Time is needed, moreover, simply to experiment with alternative programs. Too often the disappointment expressed over policies that "failed" is directed to some short-term period. But educational and other major policy programs are directed toward an established system of operation with all the weight of inertia behind it. A kind of Newtonian law of social inertia is at work with such institutions. They continue on their way unless considerable pressure is applied from the outside and it is done so for some time.

How much time is sufficient to determine whether a program "works?" Policy makers are often eager to have studies show results immediately, but in the life of an institution "immediately" means much more than 1-2 years. It is probably futile to initiate studies of effects in such institutions in such a short time. Thus, an economic program of the New Deal era, designed to help small farmers, was adjudged a failure after a few years (Southern whites objected to its assistance to blacks). But 30 years later an inordinate number of the black farmers providing support for voter registration drives in the South had benefitted from that earlier program. (Salomon). Moreover, it has taken several decades to show major reductions in the poverty population attributable to national policy. (Paglin) The Institute for Research in Poverty's experimental studies have shown some long-term successes as well as failures, and the relative utility of different policy approaches. (Haveman)

The Limits of Ethnocentric Research

Time is not the only problem limiting POE research. Whether for lack of time or discomfort in working outside our national borders, a larger comparative framework is rarely applied to the "What Works?" issue. There is really quite little comparative analysis in education policy advice. Note that almost none of NIE's research budget has been alloted to comparing the utilities of similar policies in different nations. This and other educational agencies share this ethnocentric orientation which, however, is not found in studies and program adoption in the fields of American public health, welfare, public housing, social insurance, and public safety.

It cannot be because education here has significantly different problems than elsewhere. In all nations there are serious problems of the poor education of cultural minorities and an attendant search for politically and pedagogically acceptable strategies. (Kirp; Wirt 1979) There are common problems of generating sufficient school finances in the face of faltering economies. Decline in the birth-rate and subsequent reduction in the school population (Boyd) are not special to the United States. Pressures to open educational decision making to others than the professionals is being experienced in other nations. Thus, despite a different tradition in Australia of centralized school organization and finances, their system today reverberates to many of the same conflicts that American experience. The result has been a picture in both nations of "schoolmen in the squeeze." (Murphy; Harman & Wirt)

It is not merely policy information that is lost in this reluctance to search comparatively for utility. Also lost is a richer theoretical and conceptual basis for the field of POE. If we do not compare national units of analysis, we have the same problem in not comparing sufficient numbers of American states. (Burlingame and Geske) Like the policy maker, we too rarely act on the basis of knowledge produced from different contexts. Why the comparative method in education can be significant in producing knowledge that is more valid and generalizable has been well argued recently by Farrell (1979). Possibly why we too often eschew comparative studies is that they require the availability of good theory. Merritt and Coombs (p. 52) recently put quite concisely the interactive nature of theory and this method:

> ...the explanation of why something happens in a given system requires the application of a theory. The development and testing of theory requires explicit comparison. Without the systematic cross-system comparisons, we won't develop the theories we need; without these theories we won't explain much of anything, even within a single system.

That last phrase, "even within a single system," is an important reminder that policy research has validity problems when it is based only on intra-nation evidence. Policy makers and bureaucrats in American education have a propensity to block off international experience which might prove useful, unlike their counterparts in Australia and Canada. They also block out evidence drawn from others of the 50 states if it is uncomfortable, same is evident down at the school district. The comment, "Well, things are different here," highlights a provincialism that education consultants hear all the time. It is not surprising to find that in the early stages of national policy innovation in our schools, success comes most in districts wishing to adopt a new federal program. (Berman and McLaughlin) Even where "the feds" use coercion, as in desegregation, small levels of force are useless, for it takes large threats to overcome this inertia. (Rodgers and Bullock)

This resistance to new programs based on evidence from here or elsewhere creates an inertia syndrome in policy adoption and implementation. It is part of what Aaron (pp. 155-59) has suggested about social science research, that is, it tends to be conservative. Asked by policy makers for simple answers to complex problems, social scientists will more often provide conflicting interpretations of the situation and its attendant remedies. (Crain)

This confuses the policy maker, particularly when results more often show what will not work rather than what will. Or the social research provided may not be appropriate to the policy institution's needs, as has been argued for the federal courts. (Rist; von Euler) Faced with such confusion, judges, legislators, and administrators have a powerful argument for not acting and so fall back on existing policy. Or, the Babel of research justifies them making only minor changes, more for symbolic purposes than substantive gains.

Research Needs: A Dynamic Concept

Much writing on policy analysis assumes that knowledge is needed in the same way by all political actors. As noted, Weiss's categories of the meaning of "use" should reorient us away from any simplisitic models such as the problem-solving or knowledge-driven. An even more sophisticated model is required to encompass the fact that, in the absence of value-free research (House), there are different values served by the knowledge function at different stages of the policy process. We turn now to that task.

Types of Research Knowledge

A more complex model of research uses requires understanding that there are at least four major kinds of policy analysis into which social research feeds.[2] Descriptive analysis is the familiar recounting of events and ideas as they interact in reality. Much of this is bound to a chronological framework, and is found in innumerable case studies. This mode is to be distinguished from explanatory knowledge, which seeks for causes for the events provided by description. In POE research examples are the role of the party in England and the U.S., (Peterson), or the shift of education pressure group types in the U.S. (Iannaccone)

Critical knowledge evaluates some policy outcomes in terms of alternative outcomes; thus program X fails to meet goals 1 and 2 compared with program Y. Or, the critical framework may be overtly value-based; treating unruly students with a tranquilizer, rather than by special pedagogy, is incompatible with the goal of human dignity. Finally, we are quite far from a fourth form of knowledge which policy analysis could provide--forecasting. Knowledge of the observable present extrapolated to the most likely future is rare in the POE field, although most valuable to policy makers. Some of this is visible in study of school closings and consolidation, when demography write with an immovable hand. (Boyd) Such analysis requires good base-line data, but in POE studies little of this appears for a fullset of units of analysis--districts or states.

Our field has done much description and explanation, but little criticism, and almost no forecasting. Much more criticism of political processes in education should be undertaken. As just one sign of this lack, reviews of POE books tend to be much more respectful than a commitment to criticism as part of our work would require. Surely there is more than one frame of reference that analysts could bring to bear. As we develop more confidence in our work and more broadly-based knowledge, this critical function should grow stronger. We lack voices from neo-Marxist and conservative thought about the political process of schools, (but see Katznelson) although these

are evident in other education areas such as pedagogy, professionalism, and finances.

The adoption of the forecasting approach to POE would raise new, significant queries. What are the most likely consequences for educational politics of enrollment contraction, of a better educated public, of having only a minority of married adults with children in school, or of energy shortfalls (Wiles)? What will most likely be the political role of school administrators if disenchantment with public schools continue, if more laypersons organize into separate special interests to obtain what they regard as their proper share of school resources, (Salisbury) and if the expanding state role continues? (Wirt 1980a) These highly relevant questions in the current and future policy scene must be made with great hesitancy because we lack forecasting models. But by raising these questions, we may begin thinking in such modelling terms.

Policy Makers' Information Needs and the Policy Process

The suggestion that knowledge based on social research is not monolithic stimulates a parallel inference that different kinds of knowledge may be needed at different stages of the policy process. Knowledge from research may be conceived as situational. Explicit in this concept is the assumption that knowledge is a form of power which takes different shapes in different power contexts. In short, the use of knowledge depends upon the stage of policy making, where it is most likely with other forms of power to produce political strategies.

Table 1 incorporates a number of implications which flow from this concept of knowledge as situational.

Table 1

Policy Makers' Needs for Social Research
Policy Stage and Program Disposition

In the stages below, the need is for research that:

Policy Makers' Disposition	Issue Emergence	Alternative Formulation	Authoritative Decision	Implementation/ Evaluation
Pro :	Exemplifies Program Goals	Supports Goal Maximization	Facilitates Coalition Formation	Fosters Administrative Efficiency and Positive Program Effects
Uncommitted :	Provides Decription of Policy Field	Forecasts Likely Effects of Alternatives on Cleintele	Estimates Program Effects on Survival	Depends on Program Effects
Anti :	Challenges Program Goals	Supports Goal Minimization	Facilitates Coalition Formation	Weakens Administrative Efficiency and Shows Negative Program Effects

The nine cells of this table are rough estimates of the kind of research knowledge that policy makers need as part of the strategy of competing group leaders. Note that the reasoning here is that a given group's research needs change with each stage of the process. Thus, those supporting a program --the "Pro" of Table 1-- want information which will also be supportive. But with successive stages their exact needs shift, seeking knowledge that: provides good examples of current programs; reinforces, a particular policy alternative then in debate; assists the mobilization of other groups; and shows that a program subsequently met its goals and had good effects. The "Anti" policy makers who oppose the preceding at different stages could use research knowledge that: challenges the goals of existing programs; plays down the others' goals so as to facilitate an opposing coalition formation; and shows the enacted program not to have been efficient or effective.

The policy makers whose disposition toward such a policy conflict is "Uncommitted" may well constitute the largest of the three groups, given the issue specialization characteristic of legislators and administrators. This group does not view research as material to be manipulated, but as something which will describe the policy field's problems which create the current issue conflict. When considering alternatives, they need information on how proposed programs will affect their own constiuents. When the decision must be made, they need estimates, of how proposed programs will affect their own political survival on the basis of which decisions can be made as to their appropriate coalition. Their needs in the implementation and evaluation stages may not be as powerful as the committed partisans on opposing sides, unless the results threaten their own constituents.

Such a crude model as this simplifies many elements of a complex process. The stages of policy conflict are not as distinct in experience as they are given conceptually here. The needs of any of these three groups do not stop at one point in the process and shift abruptly to another; rather, they overlap in time and practice. But if we are to begin addressing more fully the linkages between policy scholarship and the policy process, such modelling is necessary. For the process is clearly dynamic, not frozen to some organization chart. It incorporates the different meanings of research utilization which Weiss (1977a, pp. 11-16) has found in the literature. It shows also that at successive stages of the policy process, when groups increasingly narrow their decisional options, research based on traditional knowledge-driven and purposive models becomes less and less useful. Rather, an interactive model of research utilization seems more likely. Studies of federal decision makers' use of such research seem best to fit such a model. (Patton et al.; Caplan; Knorr) Too, research can fill a major role in simply orienting policy makers to guiding concepts of the social world, and so set their basic perspectives on reality and its social problems.

Legislative Roles and Information Needs

As little of the research suggested in this paper has been performed (almost no references to the subject appear in the last decade of Education Index under this or related headings), there is little empirical material to evaluate. But a forthcoming book by Douglas Mitchell (1981) is first and major step. This is a three-year NIE study of policy makers for education in Arizona, California, and Oregon, focused on their role orientations,

and information needs at different stages of law making. It expands on the seminal work of Wahlke et al. (1962) on the delegate, trustee, and politico roles ascribed state legislators. Mitchell demonstrates that at each of four stages of legislation (much like those of Table 1) different orientations toward decision making are dominant, each requiring specific resources and techniques. Policy making is viewed holistically as a complex interactive process.

For example, legislators may alternately rely on value judgments, legal precedents, friendship ties, or technical, scientific expert judgments to make decisions. Among the 117 legislators, staff consultants, lobbyists and executive branch persons interviewed, all recognized that social values are more important than these other bases for action. A person's current legislative work, not prior experiences, shapes his or her orientation toward policy making. Facing at least four types of expertise--legal, political, technical, and scientific--policy makers given them different weights.

Social science was found to be important, not merely for its intellectual effects at each stage, but also for its important impact on the social processes surrounding the decision making. Thus:

> ...social science influences the development of 'interest group solidarity' as well as the 'conceptualization of issues' during the articulation [or first] stage. It 'strengthens coalitions' as well as 'solving problems' during aggregation. It enhances 'debate winning' capabilities as well as helping to 'assess evidence' during allocation. And science utilization encourages the 'mobilization of criticism' as well as the 'evaluation of programs and/or policies' during the oversight stage. (Mitchell, chapter 6)

Besides providing a strong theoretical base for viewing this linkage between knowledge and power in state education policy making, Mitchell offers some policy recommendations of his own for legislatures and for social science uses in the future.

Overall, several broad findings are of central importance here. First, social research is only one of the possible information bases for decision making; necessarily, such knowledge must compete in a political forum, i.e., where there is conflict. (House) Second, such expertise in reality becomes subordinate to the basic social values of those who use or reject it. That is, in policy making as in scholarship there are no value-free research projects. (Mornell; Orfield 1979) Third, these uses of knowledge do improve the precision and substantive quality of policies studied. Fourth individuals employ this and other forms of expertise in quite diverse patterns which are related not merely to their social values but to such matters as reference groups, decisional styles, and orientation to authority. These elements combine differentially to shape those basic legislative role-orientations which underly variations in decisional behavior. Finally, social science has not merely intellectual functions, e.g., altering how people will think about issues on the agenda. It also has social functions by changing relationships among decision makers.

This study thus shares some of the concepts that earlier portions of the paper urged as necessary ways of viewing the uses of social research. Such

research is not value-free, it has manipulative utility, it must be conceptualized as part of a dynamic process of policy making, its uses vary with the situation, and it can have more subtle influences than just plugging an information gap. Such an approach to research utilization would sensitize one not merely to the implicit value biases of the researcher and his or her reference groups. More, it calls for understanding the politicization of knowledge across the entire policy process, with different intellectual needs at each stage for each set of actors.

In this way can be seen how far we have come from the Greek concept of knowledge as virtue with our emphasis on knowledge as power.

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Footnotes

1. The Ford Foundation, NIE and the Australian government are currently finishing a two-year study of political, economic, and administrative problems underlying that tension. Publications are available from Center for Education Research at Stanford.

2. The following four types are modified from Johnson (1975).